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Stylistic Analysis of Election Banners of Ruling and Opposition Parties in 2016 Sarawak State Election

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Abstract

This paper presents a stylistic analysis of election banners put up by the ruling and opposition parties during the 2016 state election campaign in Sarawak, Malaysia. The specific aspects analysed were the graphetic, typographical and textual features. Election banners put up during the 2016 state election in three cities in Sarawak were photographed. Using Crystal and Davy's (2006) framework, 30 election banners were analysed. The results showed different use of banner space by the ruling and opposition parties. The ruling party banners usually have the photograph of the candidate, sometimes side by side with the chief minister's photograph. The opposition parties put more text on the banners, often capitalised for emphasis. Most of the election banners conveyed clear messages using factual and literal language. In trying to fit as many words as possible into the banner to highlight pertinent issues to the electorate, the opposition parties tended to use phrases separated by commas but the ruling party banners had short sentences, mostly stating the party and candidate to vote for. The study showed that the ruling and opposition political parties use different strategies in their election banners to persuade voters because of their differential status and position in the society.

Keywords: Stylistic Analysis, Election Banner, Visual Space, Lexical Choice, Malaysia